

4408. L. 2
CHEAP REPOSITORY.

SUNDAY READING.

D A V I D,

THE

CHOSEN OF GOD.



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CHESTER FIELD

REVEREND

D. A. V. I. D.

C. H. O. S.



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DAVID, &c.

ING Saul having offended the Lord he commanded his servant, Samuel the prophet, to take his horn with oil, and to go to Bethlehem, and to call a man named Jesse, from among whose sons the Lord had selected a future king of Israel. Samuel said, "How can I go? if Saul hear of it he will kill me;" but the Lord said, "Take an heifer with thee, and say I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord, call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee whom I shall name." Samuel obeyed, and having reached Bethlehem, said unto the elders, "I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord, sanctify yourselves and come with me."

me." He then sought Jesse, and sanctified him and his sons, and called them to attend the sacrifice. Jesse and his sons attended, and Samuel caused the youths to pass before him; when looking on Eliab the eldest, he said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him?" but the Lord said, "Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his person, because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

The prophet appears, as is too often the case with us erring mortals, to have been struck with the personal graces of Eliab; the height of his person, the dignity of his mien, added perhaps to the manly expression of his countenance, led the prophet to cry out, "Surely the anointed of the Lord is before him." But how beautifully is he reproved. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." What a lesson is this to us, to turn our attention inward; how serious, how important a concern is it to keep our hearts as much as in us lies, purified from the sinful lusts of the flesh, that they may become temples for the holy spirit to dwell in. "Ye are temples," says our blessed Lord, "of the Holy Ghost;" but we cannot be so if we suffer the spirit of the world to make his abode in us.

Our attention is too often apt to be directed to that part which perisheth; we are anxious to provide for the comforts of the body, for raiment, for food, and a thousand other accommodations; but alas! the soul is little thought of. Did we but

confide

consider that the eye of our Almighty Father is continually upon us, surely we should blush, and feel humbled to the dust, at every sinful thought that arises in our breasts, and lift up our hearts in humble supplication for grace to check it.

To feel the necessity of keeping a due guard upon our thoughts, we need only call to mind the striking words of our Lord Jesus Christ, it hath been said of old, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, but I say unto you, that whoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." We have sufficient authority to say it is the same with other sins, if we suffer ourselves to entertain a wish to the prejudice of our neighbour, we are equally culpable as if we in reality injured him, the opportunity only being wanting to complete our guilt, if we suffer ourselves to project a falsehood, and from want of opportunity are prevented uttering it, our heart is already defiled with the guilt though circumstances have prevented the actual commission of it.

It may not, perhaps, be possible always to prevent evil thoughts from arising, Satan being constantly upon the watch to suggest them; but we may certainly when they do arise check them; the Almighty is ever ready to assist our endeavours, when we with earnestness, and a true sense of our own weakness, call upon him. But I will now return to our narrative.

Jesse then caused seven of his sons to pass before the prophet, but he refused them all, saying, "The Lord has not chosen these; are here all thy children?"

Jesse

Jesse replied, that the youngest was employed keeping the sheep; to which the prophet answered, "Send and fetch him, for we will not sit down till he come hither."

David obeyed the summons, and, standing before the prophet, the Lord said, "anoint him for I have chosen him."

Samuel having anointed the youth with the horn of oil in the midst of his brethren, the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and Samuel left him and went to Ramah. In the mean time king Saul was exceeding sorrowful, for God was no longer with him; and his servants said, "Let my Lord now command his servants to seek out a man who is cunning player on the harp, and it shall come to pass when the evil spirit is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand and thou shalt be well."

Saul, who was, I fear, like many others, willing to stifle uneasy thoughts with amusement, rather than to humble himself before God, and repent of his sins, consented; and one of his attendants, who had by chance seen David, recommended him, saying he was a skilful player, and of an engaging countenance. Saul in consequence sent for the youth, and, pleased with his appearance, behaviour, and skill on the harp, made him his armour bearer.

In the mean time the Philistines, who were at war with the Israelites, gathered their armies for battle. And there came out of their camp a champion, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span, (equal to nine feet and six inches). He was completely armed, and to go

an idea of his immense height and bulk, we are told that his coat of mail weighed five thousand shekles of brass, that his spear was like a weaver's beam, and that the weight of his spear's head was six hundred shekles of iron. This tremendous champion of the Philistines cried aloud to the armies of Israel, saying, "Why set yourselves in battle array? Choose from among you a man and let him come down to me; if he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. I defy the armies of Israel this day: give me a man that we may fight." This daring challenge from so powerful an adversary, struck Saul and all his people with dismay. The hearts of the stoutest failed them when they beheld his immense height and bulk, and they were willing to shun a combat which promised inevitable destruction. What a triumph was this for the Philistines; during forty days Goliath, morning and evening presented himself before the Israelites and repeated his challenge.

Now the three eldest sons of Jesse, Eliab, Abinadab, and Shamnah, were in the army, and followed Saul to battle, but David, it appears, was alternately with Saul and with his father, whose sheep he still kept. The good old man, anxious for the welfare of his three sons, who were with Saul, ordered David to take some parched corn, ten loaves, with a present of ten cheeses for the captain of their thousand, and run to the camp to enquire after the health and welfare of his brethren. David, therefore, rose up early in the morning, left his sheep

sheep with a keeper; and did as Jesse his father commanded him.

Upon his arrival he saluted his brothers, and while he talked with them, the champion of the Philistines, Goliath, advanced before the armies of the Philistines and repeated his defiance. A universal panic struck the men of Israel when he appeared, and they said to David have you seen this man that is come up to defy Israel? and David said, "What reward shall await the man that shall kill this Philistine, and take away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" And they answered David, "the man who killeth him, the king will enrich with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel."

Eliab hearing the words of David was extremely displeased, he thought, perhaps, they were an indirect reproach to him, among the other Israelites for their backwardness to accept the challenge of the Philistine; or perhaps thought he discerned in them a promise of future glory, and sickened with envy at the more distant view of a rival in one whom he considered so much his inferior in skill and knowledge; for he reproves him with great warmth, "Why camest thou hither? With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness with the view no doubt of reminding him, that his thoughts should be upon his flocks rather than upon military feats, with which he had no concern."

It is not uncommon to find this sort of jealousy, not only among mankind in general, but among

brethren

brethren of the same family; the merit, the success
 one is too often a source of misery to another,
 and is the cause of numerous jealousies and dissen-
 sions; yet, how contrary is this to that spirit of
 love which is every where recommended through-
 out the Holy Scriptures; "Brethren love one ano-
 ther," saith St. Paul; and our blessed Lord adds,
 "If any man love not his brother whom he hath
 seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not
 seen."

Notwithstanding the anger which the words of
 David kindled in the breast of his elder brother,
 they were repeated to Saul, on whom they made
 such an impression that he sent for David, who,
 when come into his presence, said, "Let no man's
 heart fail because of the Philistine, thy servant
 will go and fight with him."

Saul replied, "Thou art not able to go and fight
 with him; for thou art but a youth, and he a man
 of war from his youth."

To this objection David replied, that he had slain
 a lion and a bear which fell upon his father's flock:
 "Thy servant," says he, "slew both the lion and
 the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be
 one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of
 the living God. The God that delivered me out of
 the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear,
 will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistine."

We see here no boasting of his own strength; no
 confidence in the power of his arm, further than as it
 was an instrument in the hand of God; "The God,"
 says he, "which delivered me out of the paw of
 the lion and bear, he will deliver me out of the
 hand

hand of the Philistine." Saul could no longer resist the spirit which seemed inspired by God himself; he replied, "Go, and the Lord be with thee;" and arrayed David in armour as the manner of the warriors of those days was, but David put it off saying he had not been accustomed to it, and taking a staff in his hand, he chose five smooth stones of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag; he took his sling in his hand, and thus simply armed, went out to meet the Philistine. Goliath was struck with surprize and contempt when he beheld the youth of David, and the simple weapons he brought to fight the battle of his people; his pride was wounded that a such a stripling should be brought to contend with him, and he said to David, "Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staff?" and he curst him by his gods, and he said come on, and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field." But how glorious is the answer that David makes him: "Thou comest to me with sword, and with spear, and with shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver me into mine hand, and I will smite thee, and cut off thine head from thee, and I will give the carcasses of the hosts of the Philistines this day to the fowls of the air, that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel: and all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword, nor with spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give it into our hands. David then ran to meet the Philistine, and putting his hand into his bag took from thence

stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in the forehead, and the stone sunk into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth; and David and stood upon him and drew the Philistine's sword and slew him and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled, and the Israelites pursued them, and afterwards returned and spoiled their tents." In consequence of this victory Saul set David over his armies, and, we are told, that he conducted himself so wisely that he was approved of by all the people; but it was not long before a circumstance happened that deprived him of Saul's favour. The women, as Saul and David returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, came out of the cities of Israel to meet king Saul with instruments of music, and they sung, answering each other, "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands." This was evidently giving the preference to David, which so displeased Saul, that from that day forward he beheld him with a jealous eye, and his hatred grew to such a height that he sought occasions to take his life. He did not, however, chuse that his hand should be openly against him, but he proposed to give him his daughter in marriage upon condition that he would fight his battles against the Philistines, hoping that they would fall by their hand. David was accordingly married to Michal, Saul's daughter; but Saul's hatred to David still encreased, insomuch that he resolved to take his life; through the friendship of Jonathan, Saul's son, David was apprized of this, and was let down by his wife from

from the window and escaped. Saul however got intelligence whither David had taken refuge, and pursued him, but it pleased the Lord to deliver him out of his hand. David at length, we are told, abode in the cave of Adullam, and when it was known that he was there numbers resorted to him so that he became captain over upwards of four hundred men. With these he went against the Philistines, who had besieged a city called Keilah and delivered the Keilites out of their hands. Saul still pursued him, but David escaped out of his hand. At length Saul took three thousand men and went to seek him in the wilderness of Engedon and when he was seeking David among the rocks we are told that he went into a cave to uncover his feet. This was observed by David's men who were on the outside of the cave, and they said to David "Behold the day when the Lord said unto thee I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do with him as it shall seem good unto thee!" upon this David advanced toward Saul, and privately cut off the skirt of his robe; but even for this trifling indignity his heart afterwards smote him, and he said to his men, "the Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed." With these words he slayed his servants, and suffered them not rise against Saul. And when Saul arose and went out of the cave David followed, and cried after him saying, "my lord, the king;" and when Saul looked behind him David stooped with his face to the earth and made obeisance to him: and David said, wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, behold David seeketh

keth thy hurt, behold this day thine eyes have
 how that the Lord had delivered thee into my
 hand, in the cave, and now farther see, yea see the
 end of thy robe is in my hand; and in that I cut
 off and killed thee not, know and see that there
 neither evil nor transgression in my hand; and
 that I have not sinned against thee, though thou
 testest after my soul to take it."
 This and more that David said to the same pur-
 pose moved Saul so that his heart, as well it might,
 melted within him, and he lifted up his voice and
 said; and he said to David, "thou art more right-
 eous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good,
 whereas I have rewarded thee evil; wherefore, the
 Lord reward thee for the good thou hast done unto
 me this day."

After such an instance of generous forbearance,
 one would have supposed Saul would have ceased
 persecuting David, but alas! his sins had obliged
 the Lord to depart from him, and he was wholly
 guided by that evil spirit who is the father of all
 wickedness. Some time after he arose, and taking
 six thousand men with him, he went to seek David
 in the wilderness of Ziph; in his way he pitched
 his tent on a hill called Hachilah, which David
 having apprized of by spies which he sent out, he
 took with him Abishai, one of his men, and went by
 night into the camp of Saul, whom he found sleep-
 ing within the trench, with his men asleep also
 and about him. And Abishai said to David,
 Behold the Lord hath delivered thine enemy into
 mine hand this day, now let me I pray thee smite
 David to the earth at once." But David prevented
 him.

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